



Cougar confirmed in Juneau County

By Paul A. Smith of the Journal Sentinel

Oct. 21, 2011 | (11) COMMENTS

The photograph of a cougar, taken Oct. 16 in Juneau County, has been verified as legitimate by two wildlife biologists with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The photograph, taken at 9:21 p.m. Sunday, shows a young adult cougar moving against a background of native grasses. The camera was located about two miles north of Mauston.

Ed Culhane, DNR public affairs manager for the West Central and Northern regions, issued the following information and trail cam image Friday afternoon:

Two DNR biologists – Adrian Wydeven and Jon Robaidek – visited the site today, interviewed the landowner, checked other photos in sequence on the camera and checked the background in the photograph against the actual location.

"It's obviously a cougar," Wydeven said of the large, tawny cat in the photograph. "It's good sized, most likely a young adult."

DNR officials learned of the photograph Friday. The landowner hadn't checked the camera for several days. A time stamp on the photo establishes the date it was taken.

While it is not possible to determine the gender of the cat using the photograph, Wydeven said it is likely this is a male cougar in search of new territory.

This is the seventh time a trail camera has captured a cougar in Wisconsin, although three of these instances probably involved the same cougar. DNR biologists have confirmed the presence of four individual cougars in Wisconsin during the past three years.

However, Wydeven said that based on times, location and other evidence, it is likely that a minimum of six different cougars have visited Wisconsin since January, 2008, when a cougar observation near Milton was confirmed by tracks and DNA tests of a blood sample.

During the summer of 2010, the DNR investigated several reports of horses and livestock being injured by cougars in Juneau County. State and federal wildlife officials investigated but were unable to find confirming evidence.

Cougars are capable of incredible stealth and have been known to travel large distances through populated areas without being detected.

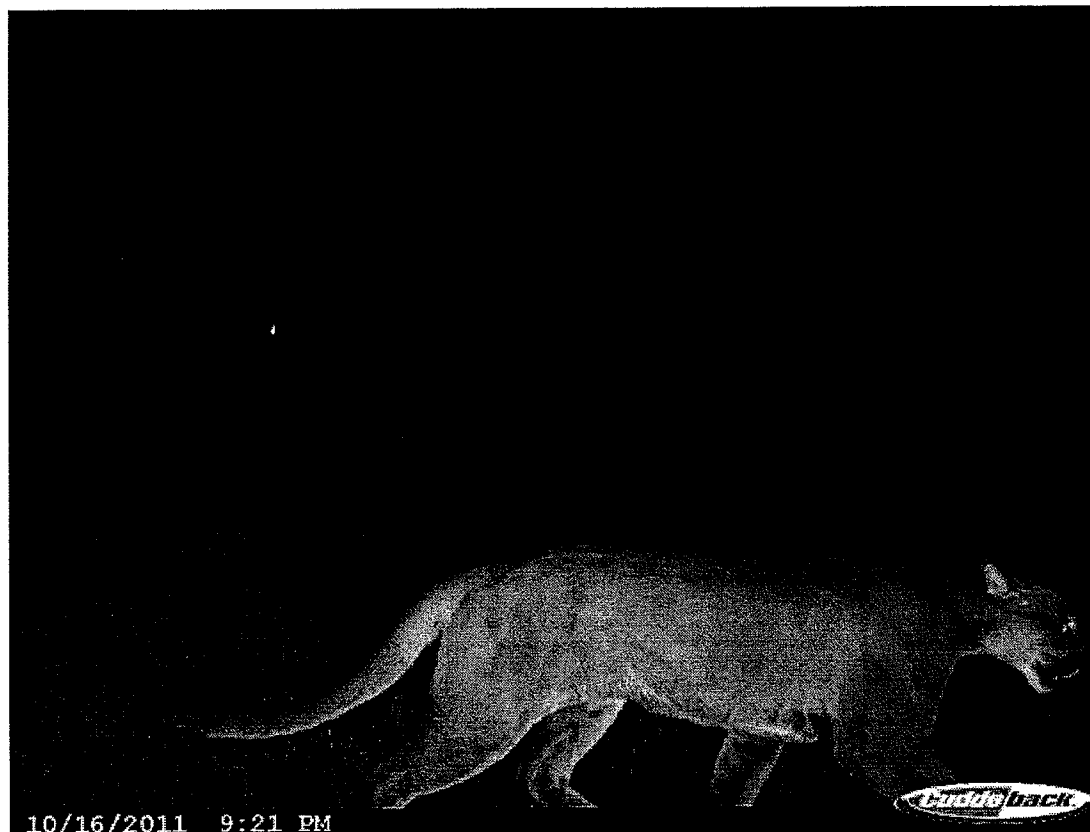
The four cougars that left DNA evidence in Wisconsin were all identified as young males with genetics that make it likely they originated in the Black Hills of South Dakota. DNR biologists believe all the sightings in Wisconsin are likely due to young male cougars traveling great distances in search of territory and mates.

This past summer, DNA evidence confirmed that a cougar killed in a vehicle crash in Connecticut was the same "St. Croix cougar" that passed through Wisconsin.

There is no evidence of cougars breeding in Wisconsin, Wydeven said.

DNR officials emphasized that citizen observations are critical to cougar monitoring, and they are asking landowners and outdoor enthusiasts to become familiar with the [Rare Mammal Observation Form](#) on the DNR's website.

The photo below was provided by the DNR and shows the cougar near Mauston.



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DNR official says backyard intruder near Lena 'an obvious cougar'

BY SCOTT WILLIAMS • SWILLIAMS@GREENBAYPRESSGAZETTE.COM • MAY 29, 2010

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LENA — A homeowner with a motion-sensitive camera to track wildlife in his backyard has captured evidence of a cougar near this Oconto County community.

An official with the state Department of Natural Resources said it is likely the first confirmed cougar sighting in Northeastern Wisconsin.

Lena is located about 30 miles north of Green Bay.

Adrian Wydeven, a DNR mammal ecologist, said he has examined the photo and believes it is authentic.

"It was an obvious cougar," he said.

Jamie Demmuth, 34, who lives in a rural area north of Lena, said the mounted camera's timer shows that the animal passed through his backyard at about 10:40 p.m. on May 20.

The blurry image shows an animal near backyard playground equipment used by Demmuth's 2-year-old son.

Demmuth said the mounted camera in the past has captured images of deer, raccoon and other wildlife in the neighborhood.

"We get all kinds of critters," he said. "But nothing like this."



A homeowner near Lena used a motion-sensitive camera in his backyard to capture evidence of a cougar. Submitted photo

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Cougar image caught on trail camera in Dunn County, Wis.

Cat is similar size to one spotted in north suburbs

By Andy Rathbun

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Updated: 12/23/2009 12:10:05 AM CST



A cougar was photographed by a trail camera Saturday night near Downsville, Wis. The animal is believed to be the same one that left tracks last week along farmland in Spring Valley, Wis. (Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)

A cougar has been caught on camera in Dunn County, Wis.

It's likely the same animal that left tracks last week along farmland in the village of Spring Valley, Wis., officials said. A trail camera captured a photo of the big cat Saturday night as it was walking southwest of Downsville, Wis.

On Monday, it was discovered that the cougar had killed a buck fawn. The fawn was found about 100 yards from where the photo was taken, said Jess Carstens, wildlife biologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources office in Menomonie.

The partially eaten fawn had been covered with cornstalks, Carstens said, calling that a common way for cougars to hide their kills. The cougar returned to the carcass for leftovers at some point, and fresh tracks were observed Tuesday.

Carstens estimated the fawn weighed 90 to 100 pounds. The spot where the kill was found is the cougar's last known location, Carstens said.

The DNR will monitor the kill site to see if the cougar returns, said Ed Culhane, a DNR spokesperson.

The cougar appears to be moving southeast at a rate of five to seven miles per day, officials said.

Last Wednesday, a farmer in Spring Valley spotted what he believed were cougar tracks. It was confirmed Friday that the tracks belonged to a cougar, and hair samples from the site were collected for testing, said Harvey Halvorson, a wildlife biologist for the DNR.

It's not clear whether the cougar in Wisconsin is the same animal seen crossing

through the Twin Cities' northern suburbs earlier this month, Halvorson said. That animal was last spotted Dec. 11 in Stillwater.

Officials have said the recent cougar tracks in Minnesota and Wisconsin appear to be similar in size.

The DNR has no immediate plans to capture the animal, Culhane said in a statement. Landowners in the area are being asked to report any signs of the animal to the department.

Though confirmed reports of cougars in the area are rare, cougar tracks were found



(Courtesy the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.)

in May in Pepin County and one was seen in March near Spooner, Wis.

Cougars are protected animals in Wisconsin. It's illegal to kill them except to protect a human from injury. Cougars typically avoid humans, and the risk of one attacking someone is small, officials say.

For more information on how to report cougar sightings, visit dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/mammals/cougar/sightings.htm.

Andy Rathbun can be reached at 651-228-2121.



Assembly Bill 82 Informational Bullet Points

Brad Koele, Wildlife Damage Specialist
Scott Loomans, Wildlife Regulations Specialist

Good morning Chair Mursau and Assembly Natural Resources Committee members:

- A very brief update on the status of cougars in Wisconsin is that we have confirmed the presence of four individual animals during the past three years.
- Based on times, location and other evidence, it is likely that a minimum of six different cougars have visited Wisconsin since January, 2008, when a cougar observation near Milton was confirmed by tracks and DNA tests of a blood sample.
- We have not seen any indication that breeding animals have taken up residence here and wouldn't expect that until it happens in MN or IA, which are closer to the likely source population in SD.
- While we have investigated complaints, depredation of domestic animals by cougars has not been confirmed in Wisconsin.
- Cougars are a state protected species.
- Effective November 1, our 2011 spring hearing rule establishes that a landowner or any person with the landowner's permission can kill a cougar that is in the act of wounding, biting or killing domestic animals.
- Six other species are already part of the Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims program, which is funded through a \$2.00 surcharge on all hunting licenses and \$11.50 from the sale of each bonus antlerless deer carcass tag in "regular" deer management units.
 1. Deer that are not farm-raised deer.
 2. Bear.
 3. Geese.
 4. Turkey.
 5. Sandhill crane if hunting of sandhill cranes is authorized by the department.
 6. Elk, if the department has promulgated a rule that establishes a season for hunting elk.
- Note that cougars would be unique on this list because hunters would be responsible for the cost of damage caused - even though there is no established hunting season.
- See next page for related statutes and rules.

Related Statutes and Rules:

29.889 Wildlife damage abatement program; wildlife damage claim program.

(1) DEFINITION. In this section, "wildlife damage" means damage caused by any of the following wild animals that are not subject to regulation under ch. 169:

(a) Deer that are not farm-raised deer.

(b) Bear.

(c) Geese.

(d) Turkey.

(e) Sandhill crane if hunting of sandhill cranes is authorized by the department.

29.889(1)(f) (f) Elk, if the department has promulgated a rule that establishes a season for hunting elk.

29.563 Fee schedule. (13) WILDLIFE DAMAGE SURCHARGE.

(a) *Surcharge generally.* The surcharge for approvals listed under subs. (2) (a) 1., 2. and 4. to 9. and (b) 1. to 8. and (4) (a) 1. and 1m. and (b) 1. and 1m. is \$2 and shall be added to the fee specified for these approvals under subs. (2) and (4).

(b) *Surcharge for conservation patron license.* The surcharge for licenses listed under sub. (4) (a) 2. and 2m. and (b) 2. and 2m. is \$4 and shall be added to the fee specified for these approvals under sub. (4).

20.370(5)(fq) *Wildlife damage claims and abatement.* All moneys received under ss. 29.181, 29.559 (1r), and 29.563 (13) and not appropriated under par. (fr) and subs. (1) (hs) and (Ls) and (5) (fs) to provide state aid for the wildlife damage abatement program under s. 29.889 (5) (c) and the wildlife damage claim program under s. 29.889 (7) (d), for county administration costs under s. 29.889 (2) (d), and for payments under s. 29.89.

29.559(1r) COLLECTION OF ISSUING FEE FOR BONUS DEER HUNTING PERMITS. Any person, including the department, who issues a bonus deer hunting permit shall collect, in addition to the statutory permit fee, an issuing fee for each permit. A person appointed under s. 29.024 (6) (a) 2., 3. or 4. may retain 50 cents of each issuing fee for each permit to compensate for services in issuing the permit.

CR-11-007, effective November 1, 2011

SECTION 7. NR 10.02(1)(b) is amended to read:

NR 10.02(1)(b) On private land, the landowner, lessee or occupant of the land, or any other person with permission of the landowner, lessee or occupant may shoot and kill any gray wolf or cougar in the act of killing, wounding or biting a domestic animal. Shootings shall be reported within 24 hours to a department conservation warden. The carcass of the wolf or cougar shall be turned over to the department.